

From the start, the gods made women different.

One type is from a pig--a hairy sow  
whose house is like a rolling heap of filth;  
and she herself, unbathed, in unwashed clothes,

reposes on the shit-pile, growing fat.  
Another type the gods made from a fox:  
pure evil, and aware of everything.  
This woman misses nothing: good or bad,  
she notices, considers, and declares

that good is bad and bad is good. Her mood  
changes from one moment to the next.

One type is from a dog--a no-good bitch,  
a mother through and through; she wants to hear  
everything, know everything, go everywhere,

and stick her nose in everything, and bark  
whether she sees anyone or not.

A man can't stop her barking; not with threats,  
not (when he's had enough) by knocking out  
her teeth with a stone, and not with sweet talk either;

even among guests, she'll sit and yap;  
the onslaught of her voice cannot be stopped.  
One type the gods of Mount Olympus crafted  
out of Earth--their gift to man! She's lame  
and has no sense of either good or bad.

She knows no useful skill, except to eat  
--and, when the gods make winter cold and hard

to drag her chair up closer to the fire.  
Another type is from the Sea; she's two-faced.  
One day she's calm and smiling--any guest

who sees her in your home will praise her then:

"This woman is the best in all the world  
and also the most beautiful." The next day  
she's wild and unapproachable, unbearable  
even to look at, filled with snapping hate,

ferocious, like a bitch with pups, enraged  
at loved ones and at enemies alike.

Just as the smooth unrippled sea at times  
stands still, a joy to mariners in summer,  
and then at times is wild with pounding waves--

This woman's temperament is just like that.

The ocean has its own perplexing ways.

Another type is from a drab, gray ass;  
she's used to getting smacked, and won't give in  
until you threaten her and really force her.

She'll do her work all right, and won't complain;  
but then she eats all day, all night--she eats  
everything in sight, in every room.  
And when it comes to sex, she's just as bad;  
she welcomes any man that passes by.

Another loathsome, miserable type  
is from a weasel: undesirable  
in every way--un-charming, un-alluring.

She's sex-crazed, too; but any man who climbs  
aboard her will get seasick. And she steals

from neighbors, and from sacrificial feasts.

Another type a horse with flowing mane  
gave birth to. She avoids all kinds of work  
and hardship; she would never touch a mill  
or lift a sieve, or throw the shit outside,

or sit beside the oven (all that soot!).

She'll touch her husband only when she has to.

She washes off her body every day  
twice, sometimes three times! then rubs herself  
with perfumed oil. She always wears her hair

combed-out, and dressed with overhanging flowers.

Such a wife is beautiful to look at  
for others; for her keeper, she's a pain  
--unless he is a king, or head of state  
who can afford extravagant delights.

Another type is from an ape. I'd say  
that Zeus made her the greatest pain of all--  
his gift to man! Her face is hideous.

This woman is a total laughingstock  
when she walks through the town. She has no neck,

no butt--she's all legs. You should see the way  
she moves around. I pity the poor man  
who holds this horrid woman in his arms.

She's well-versed in every kind of trick

just like an ape; what's more, she has no shame

and doesn't care if people laugh at her.  
She'd never think of doing something kind  
to anyone; she plots the whole day long  
to see how she can do the greatest harm.

Another type is from a bee. Good luck  
in finding such a woman! Only she  
deserves to be exempt from stinging blame.  
The household that she manages will thrive;  
a loving wife beside her loving man,  
she'll grow old, having borne illustrious

and handsome children; she herself shines bright  
among all women. Grace envelops her.  
She doesn't like to sit with other women  
discussing sex. Zeus gratifies mankind  
with these most excellent and thoughtful wives.

But by the grim contrivances of Zeus  
all these other types are here to stay  
side by side with man forever. Yes,  
Zeus made this the greatest pain of all:  
Woman.

If she seems to want to help  
that's when she does her keeper the most harm.  
A man who's with a woman can't get through  
a single day without a troubled mind.  
He'll never banish Hunger from his house:

unwelcome, hateful lodger, hostile god.

Just when a man seems most content at home  
and ready for enjoyment, by the grace  
of god or man, that's when she'll pick a fight,  
her battle-helmet flashing, full of blame.  
A household with a woman is at a loss

to give a decent welcome to a guest.  
The wife who seems the most restrained and good,  
she's the most disastrous of them all;  
for while her slack-jawed husband gapes at her  
the neighbors laugh at how he's been deceived.

Each man will diligently praise his own  
and blame the next man's wife; we just don't see  
that we all share alike in this hard luck.  
For Zeus made this the greatest pain of all  
and locked us in a shackle hard as iron

and never to be broken, ever since  
the day that Hades opened up his gates  
for all the men who fought that woman's war.